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## PROCEEDINGS AT PUBLIC MEETINGS.

## CO. DOWN CATHOLIC MEETING.

NEWRY, MONDAY, OCTOBER 19.

A numerous and respectable Meeting of the Catholics of this County was held this day, at the Sessions-house in this town.

*WILLIAM TODD JONES was unanimously called to the Chair.*

The Chairman having read the requisition by which the Meeting was convened,

Mr. Charles Hamilton Teeling rose, and spoke as follows:—"With extreme reluctance, Sir, I come forward to address you, and this most respectable assembly, on an occasion so important as the present; and sincerely do I wish, that the Resolutions which I now hold had been committed to abler hands, though they do not require my advocacy; they are the production, Sir, of our invaluable friend, to whose talents this county was indebted for the Resolutions adopted at the last General Meeting: they speak the language of truth, and breathe the feelings of the heart; but whether they will merit the approbation of our enemies, is not, I presume, a question for our consideration; for what language can we use, what garb can we put on, what deportment must we bear, to please our imperious masters? Ever prone to censure, ever active to misrepresent, alike ungenerous as insincere, and unfeeling as the narrow limits of their shallow policy is confined; every language have we used, every garb have we worn, every assurance have we given, to sooth the passions of their angry nature, or touch the heart with feelings for our wrongs, and unexampled patience in oppression. We have humbly solicited, we have respectfully bowed; we have been rejected unheard, and dismissed in scorn. We have addressed them in the language of woe, and we have been mocked for our sufferings; we have approached them in the garb of penance, though guilty of no crime; we have bowed before the threshold of the Constitution, nor presumed to approach its sanctuary; and we have only experienced contempt for our debasement. Then have we presumed to remind them, that we are inhabitants of a common soil, that we uphold by taxation the revenues of the state, that we swell by our numbers her military fame, that we have increased

by our industry her commerce and her wealth; and we simply ask the rights of citizens for such services in return; but our right is denied, our services are unrequited, and our prayer is given to the empty winds. Good God! when the bigotted remonstrance of a besotted corporation claims the serious attention of an assembled senate, the humble memorial of oppressed millions has been spurned in contempt: yet we do not despair; though insulted, we are not fallen; though menaced, we are not appalled; still we hold the bright form of liberty in view, we pursue it, and we will pursue it, until the possession shall be ours. Again we are summoned to our annual toil, another year of Egyptian bondage has been numbered, again we resume the task of labour, and again, perhaps, we are doomed to bitter disappointment: yet not disheartened by the past, not desponding of the future, not dismayed by disappointment, nor enervated by defeat; but with augmented numbers and rebounding strength, aided by all that is enlightened in the land. Protestant *security* linked with Catholic freedom, and the happiness of a common country resting on the energies of both, no longer do we lowly crouch to kiss the threshold from whence we have been lately spurned, but, bold in numbers and our country's cause, we assume a manlier front, and thunder at the portal; and what do we demand?—not to overturn the fabric, nor yet to deform its beauty, not to sully its lustre, nor paralise its powers, but an equal, yes an equal participation in that Constitution, which our blood, our strength, our wealth, and our being uphold. Deny our right, you insult its justice; reject our call, then boast your own security. But though we do not meanly supplicate, neither do we proudly boast; nor yet do we seize the awful hour of peril or inebriate security to urge our claims, for we scorn to possess by fraud, the inheritance that is ours by birthright; honour shall mark our steps, and virtue will guide our course; and even should the sentinel of despotism lie lulled in debauchery, the bursting voice of millions shall rouse him from his trance; in the dignity of nature, we will assume great nature's right, and, with head erect and elevated crest, we will on to the temple of freedom. In all the black catalogue of

human crimes, the sin of ingratitude, perhaps, stands foremost; and now, when every show of argument has failed, when even a pretext no longer exists (were pretext for injustice wanting,) shall we be falsely assailed with the base charge of ingratitude, and reproached for receiving with thankless hearts what has been extorted from a sparing and parsimonious hand; and the man amongst us who has courage to assert his rights, or virtue to proclaim to the world his wrongs, is branded as a traitor, belied as a seducer, or calumniated as a rebel in the land. Be it so, we shall bear the odium; for if to arrest the lawless hand of power, to love my country, and her wrongs redress, unite the people in the sacred ties of friendship, love, and liberty divine, can merit treason's epithet so foul, then do I glory in a traitor's name. Never let us forego that station in society which nature designed free-minded man to fill. For, when Heaven stamp'd him with the form of man, she also blessed him with liberty, her choicest gift, and she gave him intellect to value, and courage to defend the bright endowment; and he who tamely suffers it to be wrested from him, is the worst of particides and slaves. Dearer than life is freedom to man, and still dearer, in proportion to nature at large; for, by privation of the former, society only sustains the loss of one member, but he who tamely submits to injustice, rivets the chains of millions, and makes ages wretched. If we must then wear chains, let us *clank* them; and perhaps our gentle masters, if not in pity to us, in tenderness to their own repose, may knock off our fetters, that they may slumber their lives in quiet. But it is not, my countrymen, it is not because we are Catholics, that we are denied the rights of men, the rights which the poorest Protestant can boast, the rights which the meanest, the basest in society can enjoy the moment they become underserving, of them, by an abandonment of honour, of conscience, and their God. Is there a spot on this habitable earth where similar folly and infatuation prevails? Here we are only honoured as we become base, confided in as we become false, and only esteemed morally virtuous in proportion as morality and virtue have ceased to sway. It is not, I affirm, because we are attached to the faith of our ancestors, that we are aliens in the land. When the religion we profess was the religion of all, when alike English and Irish

adored in the same temple, the same God, and the same religious forms were common to both, still was unhappy Ireland a persecuted land. Protestant government, Catholic government, no amelioration for us; no securities could satisfy, no conditions could please; we were persecuted as *Irish* then, and as *Irish* we are persecuted still. Were we to renounce what our liberal legislature terms the errors of the Church of Rome, had we the disposition and power to cede, not a Veto, but to place the Sovereign in St. Peter's chair, and salute him the first Bishop in the Christian world, should the immense mass of Irish population sacrifice conscience to power, and sully their father's virtues and their own; think you, would Ireland then enjoy freedom, concord, and peace? Ah, no; freedom to the Negro, amity with the Indian, but slavery and discord to the sons of Erin. What then will secure to us that liberty, happiness, and peace, without which Emancipation is only an empty sound? It is a fair, free, unbought, unawed representation of the people, the only measure worth pursuing, the only blessing worth contending for! Was our religion virtually the cause, and not the pretext for oppression, why support that religion abroad, which you persecute at home?—why fight for it in the old world, and uphold it in the new?—why grant to a foreign colony the exercise of their religion and their laws, and deny to the once imperial and still brightest gem in your diadem, the privileges which Ruffians can boast, and aliens enjoy?—why, on a recent occasion, raise our cherished hopes, to sink us still the lower, sporting with the feelings of our nature, as if the God of our nature had formed us with these feelings less acute?—why tantalizingly present us with the sweet waters of conciliation, and embitter those sweets with the gall of disappointment, and then, whilst the bright gem of freedom is presented to our view, it is snatched from our embrace like an empty shadow? And yet, Ireland, though robbed of her independence, plundered of her birth-right, denied the merit of her own virtues, and even left without a name, Ireland insulted, tantalized, and despised, still is Ireland rich in the possession, of what her enemies can never deprive her of, the religion of her ancestors, the virtue of her daughters, and the valour of her sons. Yes, the valour of her sons shall shine, whenever their wrongs, and the crimes of her enemies, shall be forgot-

ten. Continue to enslave them, impossible; destroy them, equally impracticable. I stand in the most Protestant County of Ulster, the first County in Ireland in Protestant wealth and Protestant numbers, I may add Protestant liberality, and yet the Catholic population of this county alone, numbers a hundred and fifty thousand souls. And what was her once population ere the ranks of Ulster were thinned by the savage policy of force, ere a foreign legislation ruled the land, and attachment to the soil became treason and death. Yes, Britons, like the Romans of old, you pursue an equally cruel and fatal policy; proud of your freedom, proud of your independence, you seem only to enjoy those blessings, as they enable you to oppress and enslave mankind: but *they* pursued a more open and generous warfare: *you* practice a dark and mysterious policy, corrupting, inflaming, and dividing your people. Must folly and misrule ever guide your counsels? Will reason never resume her sway? Is it on murmurs and oppression you rest your hopes of defence? And is *your* state alone to stand immutable and secure, amidst the awful crash of surrounding nations? Even those whose duty it is to enforce moral rectitude, by the example of good order, have, forgetful of both, inflamed the passions of opposing factions, and poisoned the hearts of Christians, that the Almighty has formed to love each other, and this under the specious pretext of religious zeal. Unfeeling monsters? why embitter the sweets of social life? why pervert the blessings that religion brings? Religion is pure, generous, and sincere; it claims no party, knows no distinction; its blessings are widely extended to all; it teaches not hatred and strife, but benevolence and love; it is founded on love; it is the cherished offspring of Heaven, whose brightest attribute is love, for mercy springs from love. In the name, then, of love, of mercy, and that Being whom we all adore, let me conjure such of my countrymen as are most liable to be assailed by those fiends of discord, under the guise of friends, to avoid their counsel. Give not your enemies a triumph, who glory in your credulity, and acquire strength from your weakness. He is not your friend who would lead you to disorder and riot; disappoint his views by your respect for the laws, and your obedience to them, even by your non-resistance to the very forms that oppress you. Recollect, my friends, the situation of our wretched country, when Ireland,

goaded and oppressed, had, unhappily, recourse to resistance—her fairest flowers cut down, ere the ripening sun of virtue had opened their blushing fragrance to the world, her humble cottage fired, her stately mansion razed, her fertile plains a prey to savage plunder, and a licentious soldiery; “the people, the bleak mountain’s top their refuge, the canopy of Heaven their covering, their sustenance and hope in God alone.” Say, shall they rest secure? Ah, no! the racking hand of torture yet pursues, and then from the sweet blossomed heath of the mountains, to the noxious damps of the dungeon, from the dungeon to the scaffold, were her children hurled! But ’tis passed, thank heaven ’tis past, and liberty and peace will yet be ours. See ranged on our side, those men whom the early frowns of power, and the late seductive charms of wealth have failed to purchase; see Ulster’s revered Synod pleads your cause, Ulster ever famed for virtue, her priesthood, pure and patriot like your own. The generous-minded, the enlightened Protestant, the meek, the benevolent quaker, the humane, the good of all sects are with us, every virtuous unbought talent still is ours, and can we doubt success. The press, the scourge of tyranny, the people’s shield, is devoted to our cause. The threat of power can never awe the virtuous; and whether in the ardent pursuit of proclaiming truth to Europe and the world, or immured in the dungeon’s solitary gloom, the youthful patriot spends his early days, those days are no less ours. When thy name, Magee, shall cease to be remembered, when thy talents and thy virtues are forgotten, the breasts of Irishmen must cease to feel, and the hearts that are bursting will vibrate no more. Suffer me now to indulge in a local feeling, after an absence of sixteen years from my native province, in which period I have not been a stranger to the casualties incident to those whose feelings are obnoxious to corruption and power; permit me now, with a proud and melancholy sadness, to turn to that spot where patriot virtue used to dwell, and where, even yet, its fire is not extinguished to Belfast; Belfast, early seat of freedom and flowing genius, it was in thy virtuous school my youthful mind found these early lessons, which, in ripened manhood, I have not forgotten, and which the hand of death only can efface. And, though I have outlived many of your patriot sons, and the companions of my

youth shall greet me no more, still my heart loves to linger where it first beat responsive to the sound of Freedom. When justice slumbers, when tyrants menace, when the timid are appalled, and even virtue, for a moment, seems to yield, then shall your moral and manly productions fire the latent spark, put bigotry to shame, convey instruction to the humble, and reflection to the proud. And though I am not profusely given to praise, I trust we shall not part this day until we shall have paid to the proprietors of *The Dublin Evening Post* and *Belfast Magazine*, that tribute of respect which virtue merits, and feeling minds are proud to offer. I have trespassed too long, one word and I have done. As the purity of our intentions is often only viewed through the jaundiced eye of corruption, I could wish that our calumniators would, for a moment, call reflection to their aid, and they will find that the free discussion of our claims, has uniformly tended to the advancement of our cause, and that bigotry, prejudice, and groundless fears have given way, as our views and our wishes have been published to the world.

Mr. Teeling concluded by moving the resolutions which appeared in our last *Magazine*.

The Resolutions having been read and seconded by James Bowden, Esq.

P. O'Hanlon, Esq. rose, and made some objections to one or two particular phrases used by Mr. Teeling, and said, that Mr. Teeling's speech was calculated to arouse a sympathetic feeling of disaffection; he made some remarks as to the uselessness of returning thanks to the Proprietors of the *Belfast Magazine*; and to Mr. Magee, Proprietor of the *Dublin Evening Post*, and pronounced him a convicted libeller. He offered an amendment, that went to exclude Dr. Milner from any thanks.

This amendment was seconded by Mark Devlin, Esq.

Mr. Charles Russel Christian, addressing himself to the Chairman said, Sir, in offering you my opinion on this most important subject, I must beg leave respectfully to differ in opinion from the gentleman (Mr. O'Hanlon,) who has preceded me; and, in giving you that opinion, I will cautiously avoid his example, and offer you nothing to renew or revive religious animosity, this has ever been and ever will be my study to deprecate. I conceive Mr. O'Hanlon's arguments may be comprised

BELFAST MAG. NO. LXIV.

under the following heads: he makes an attack against Dr. Milner, the brightest ornament of the church; he attacks the *Belfast Magazine*: he made an attack by misrepresenting the expressions of that justly celebrated ornament to society, C. H. Teeling, Esq. by endeavouring not only to expose him to the lash of calumny, but to leave him liable to a government prosecution. He visited, as far as the tongue of slander could, the cell of that incorruptible exposor of the public wrongs, and the dread of tyrants, John Magee, Esq. He attacked that undaunted champion of the people's rights, a name ever dear to Irishmen, Daniel O'Connell. Sir, however humble my advocacy may be in the people's rights, I would consider it a dereliction of duty, did I not come forward and warn my countrymen of the approaching danger, namely, the separation of us from our venerable prelates who guided us through ages of persecution, and whom he wishes to alienate our affections from. He has offered his advice, he commands its adoption, People, be not advised or terrified by him; thank your venerable prelates; they have piously discharged their duty to you, discharge your duty in return to them. The Catholic Board of Ireland has thanked them, and all the counties of Ireland are in progress to thank them; and will that—my delicacy forbids me saying further, but I cannot forbear saying this, that I trust in God there is not such another O'Hanlon in all Ireland. He attended your Board once, and that once he disturbed it; when I waited on him to sign your requisition, he refused it. My family, sir, in common with the rest of my countrymen, have tasted of the bitterness of that persecution for adhering to the Catholic religion, the religion of our forefathers. We have been driven from the fertile plains to the rugged mountain top. Were I, in the evening of persecution, unfortunate enough to desert the religion of my ancestors for any sordid views, it would ill become me here, this day, to arrest, claim, demand or command, as the learned gentleman has done your attention. But, feeling with you, in common with the rest of my countrymen, the degraded weight of my own enslavement, and exercising in common with you, that first privilege, the elective franchise, I am impelled to give my hearty assent to the original resolutions. And, before I sit down, Sir, permit me to move

“That our warmest thanks are justly due, and hereby given to John Magee,

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Esq., Proprietor of the Dublin Evening Post, for his indefatigable exertions in favour of Civil and Religious Liberty." This resolution was not carried.

[A general cry of Dr. Dickson resounded from every quarter, the call being repeated, and seconded from the chair.]

Dr. Dickson rose, and after adverting to the fullness and fairness with which the question, which alone should be attended to at that meeting, had been discussed by the most eloquent tongues and ablest pens in Britain and Ireland he added, that from the good sense, and persuasive eloquence which he had heard on that day, he would deem it presumptuous in him to offer a sentence to the public ear on that occasion, as he could not pretend to abilities or acquirements which enabled him either to illustrate or consolidate the foundation of Catholic claims, to the unqualified enjoyment of rights, unalienable from beings, intelligent, rational, and alive to the sensibilities and services of religion. But these things apart, said the Doctor, I feel a difficulty of another kind, this is a meeting of Catholics, I am not a Catholic, any thing therefore from me might be deemed not only impertinent but presumptuous, [*No, no, from several*] For this reason I beg to be excused from trespassing on your time at present, and, at the same time, to assure you, that, as I ever have been, so I ever shall be, the real friend to religious liberty, unalienable and unrestricted.

[The Doctor sat down, a momentary pause followed, at length the call of Dr. Dickson, from every mouth, was renewed, the Chairman repeated the request that Dr. Dickson would express his ideas and sentiments on the object of the meeting.]

Dr. Dickson then rose, and made his apology, he said, he never had risen to utter a premeditated speech, and therefore, in order to perform the duty imposed on him, would confine himself to the terms of the eloquent speeches which he had then heard, some expressions in which he thought unduly cavilled at, and others justly reprehensible. But, said the Doctor, in respect to those, I own myself a partial judge. During the address of Mr. Teeling, I felt myself rapidly carried along a gloss stream, with a gentle breeze, towards the land of diffusive benevolence, peace and joy; [*Thundering Applause*] on a sudden, said the Doctor, a change of current and of wind checked the progress of his feelings, blighted the plants which he had been long and anxiously cherishing, and

damped his hopes of being in this world regaled with their flowers, or feasted with their fruit. Several expressions used by Mr. O'Hanlon, whom he was happy in considering as his friend, and the friend of mental emancipation, forced him to express, with pain, his disapprobation; a few of them he would only mention, the one was persecution, coupled with that of obligation to gratitude for religious toleration. His idea of persecution was not confined to infliction of evil, every privation of good, or enjoyment of right, on account of religious faith, or modes of worship, was direct persecution; and, as to the word "*Toleration*," he wished it had long since been expunged from the English language; it had been the source of evils innumerable, and gratitude for religious "*toleration*" was an indirect acknowledgment that man owed the liberty of worshipping God, not to an inherent right, but to the wisdom or caprice of a fellow mortal, equally accountable as himself to the same God. As to the word "*Veto*," which he had heard frequently used in that house, and concerning which so much had been spoken and written, he should say little, why it was adopted he should say nothing, only that it was a Latin word, to which the great mass of the Catholics would affix no idea, and, therefore, would swallow implicitly; and if they refused, the mass, equally ignorant of the meaning of the word, might charge them with something unfriendly to the constitution. As to securities from the Catholic body, subsequent to the "*Veto*," I can say nothing, only that if it had security of equal interest, equal privilege, and equal access to preferment in the state, both church and state, might rest secure behind its shield, strangers to the fears, and invincible by the force of an enemy. Even without these their loyalty has raised them far above suspicion, they have been as infinitely obedient to the laws, contributed as liberally to the support of the state, and bled as profusely in its wars, as any other denomination of their fellow-subjects; this has been the fact, when the doors to promotion and office were totally barred against them, now that they are permitted to advance a few steps farther towards the fountain of honour, and were the barriers totally removed, and the Catholic permitted to rise, hand in hand, with his brethren in the scale of office, honour, and emolument, in proportion to his merits, what security

could be requisite to insure his loyalty? Would not his "property," his "prospects," his "person," his "life," be still within the reach, and subject to the authority of the laws of his country? What then can a demand of further security mean or imply? But above all, what security could arise from a renunciation of his religion? I say renunciation of his religion, for, if his religion be the bar to preferment, the renunciation of that religion would immediately remove it, and a broad and easy ascent be opened to the aspiring mind. But at what hazard would this be done? I take it for granted, that every honest man believes the principles of the religion he professes to be founded in truth and its modes most conducive to the promotion of virtue and happiness. If so, he must renounce his claim to honesty with the renunciation of his religion; in other words, he must declare himself a villain uninfluenced by his judgment, a rebel against conscience, and a stranger to the fear of God. How such infidelity to principle would be deemed a security for fidelity to the state, I cannot conceive. Here the Doctor took notice of the cry raised against Popery in those countries some years ago, and now revived among us. He observed, that at first it was heard principally from the ignorant and the bigoted; that latterly, when that was nearly silenced by the diffusion of knowledge and liberality occasioned by the repeated discussions of the Catholic question in public assemblies, and in print; it had been renewed unexpectedly from a lofty eminence, and in an alarming tone. However, the jealousy which it tended to excite, and the effects which it may tend to produce, were not confined to Catholics; if fame may be credited, all Dissenters from the national form of religion were involved in a combination to overturn church and state. Should such words have been uttered, every candid man of common observation must be sensible, that they are unfounded in fact; nay, will be sensible, should necessity ever require farther proof, which I most fervently pray that God may prevent, that the religious denominations thus defamed, have been, are, and will be, the steadiest support of the throne, and friends of their country. To sow the seeds of jealousy and suspicion is to excite discord and enmity, to divide is to weaken; and weakness directly tends to dissolution: of this, as it respects nations, I have the page of History for my

warrant: nay, I have the authority of one who could neither deceive nor be deceived, that neither "family, church, nor kingdom, divided against itself, can stand." But if division be weakness, union must be strength; union among subjects must arise from a community of interests and privileges. This alone can produce unity of counsel, and co-operation of power in the day of danger or enterprize; and if the Dissenters and Catholics of Ireland have combined for the purpose of obtaining, legally and constitutionally, a community of the former to all her inhabitants, their success must tend not to the subversion, but stability of the empire of which she is a part. Here the Doctor adverted to a similar cry against Presbyterians in the reign of Queen Anne, heightened by a voice from the same quarter, and sanctioned by virulent and abusive addresses to the throne, in which their "Toleration" was pronounced irreconcilable with the safety of both church and state, and to subsequent facts and events, by which the fallacy of the charges were fully proved, and the avenue to the offices and honours of the state, latterly opened before them, without producing even a shadow of danger to it or the church.

Mr. O'Hanlon rose again; He addressed the people in very strong terms, on the absurdity of thanking the Editors of publications which nineteen out of twenty of them had never read; nay, which perhaps not twenty then present had read. For his part, he had read only one number of the Belfast Magazine, and he thought it enough. He could not concur in the thanks which he understood were to be offered; and called upon the people to guard against being led into such an absurdity. He disapproved, in like manner of similar thanks to Counsellor O'Connell, who, he admitted, had considerable talent to work on the feelings, or arouse the passions of a public assembly; he, at the same time, expressed a high esteem and real friendship for Mr. O'Connell, the companion of his youth.

Dr. Dickson replied—He apologized for intruding himself again on their notice. He congratulated the meeting on the regularity and good temper with which the business had been conducted, and hoped that they would be speedily restored, and carefully preserved. As to the arguments used by Mr. O'Hanlon, he would, however, take the liberty of making an observation. He believed it was admitted by all logi-

cians, that an argument that proves too much, proves nothing. On this admission, he ventured to say, that his friend's argument proved worse than nothing to his purpose. Surely he will not say, that men can understand, judge of, or appreciate nothing, but what they have personally read or seen; in such case, an end would be immediately put to all information, judgment, and even confidence, among men. How many, on the same score, have ever read one of the wise and just laws, by which the upright and impartial magistrate represses the crimes which disturb society, even at this day? how much fewer fifty years ago? and fewer still at a more early period? The same may be asked of every other branch of knowledge. Men, who do not read, may hear the contents of a book recited, or even its character given by others of approved understanding, veracity and honour. From such hearing of the contents, or from confidence in the reporter, men may safely judge of the character or book, praise or dispraise, be thankful to the author for the benefit he confers, or execrate him for the evil which he has done. In fact, men do judge, feel, and speak on this very principle, in all their nearest and dearest concerns; and if this principle were abandoned, confidence among men would be annihilated, and the strongest bonds of human society broken and dissolved. On this principle, our glorious constitution is praised and respected, and the Barons (though Catholics,) who extorted it from the hand of tyranny, are embalmed in the heart of every friend to liberty; though few, even at the present day, have seen the precious Charter. On this principle, the Bible, the Statute Book of Heaven, has been received as divine by myriads who never did or could read. Destroy this principle, this regard to approved information, judgment, truth and honour, and you may condemn, and charge with absurdity the pious fool, who would be misled to thank his God for the succession of his wisdom, and gracious intentions to the human kind, on the authority of men of knowledge and integrity. The great mass of mankind have received, rejoiced in, and have been profited by the contents of this sacred book? Are there any such men in this house? Have twenty of them read the publications alluded to? Do they declare them favourable to the claim of your dearest rights, the rights of the whole world, of mankind? If so, are their authors entitled to your warmest thanks?

Of this judge ye. The Doctor then took notice of another cause of objection to the intended thanks. This was, that intemperate words and representations amounting to libels, had been uttered, and condemned. To prevent cavil, he admitted this might be the case; but these were the words and representations of one or two individuals only, and even, by what has been suggested, these have occurred only on a very few occasions. Who can pretend to perfect correctness in all his words and ways? But were the errors more and greater than alleged, still they were the errors of individuals, and nothing can be more unjust, nothing more ungenerous, than attributing the errors, indiscretions, or even crimes of an individual, to the body of which he is a member, confound them with its interest, or bring them forward in prejudice of its just and lawful claims. Under this impression, he took the liberty of suggesting the necessity, from immediate circumstances, of excluding all minor collateral circumstances, and personal merits or demerits, from their debates, and giving an entire undivided attention to the immediate object of this day's meeting. This was for a time attended to. As to the demand of total emancipation, the Doctor conceived, that any thing short of total, unqualified emancipation, was unworthy the name; that he had, early in life, fully and successfully, in a very public, numerous, and respectable assembly,\* combated the idea of partial, gradual, and, from time to time, emancipation, not only as shadowy, but delusive; it left untouched the idea of toleration, which implies not only a power, but a right to restrain. [Here he apologized for an egotism, in which, he hoped, he would be indulged for a few moments.] What he offered on that occasion was fully sanctioned afterwards, in 1793, by a declaration of his brethren, at a numerous meeting of the Synod of Ulster, a declaration, which will do honour to the memory of the Synod of that day, whenever it shall be read or heard through succeeding generations. Of partial emancipation, his ideas and language have ever been the same, nor does he conceive that they can possibly change in time to come. During the last twenty years, a variety of circumstances have occurred, in which they re-

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\* Great Volunteer Review at Belfast, 1792.



pressed the voice, and checked the pens of the timid, have given rise to insinuations, that the Presbyterians of Ulster had become indifferent, or even unfriendly, to the claims and interests of their Catholic brethren. Of the vileness of such insinuations I have ever been convinced, with respect to the body at large; and in this I am fully confirmed, by their exhibiting a skeleton of the declaration alluded to, at their last meeting. How, or why, the segment—"so far as may be consistent with the principles of the constitution," was insinuated into it, I know not, as I was not, indeed could not possibly be present, when it was brought forward. Had I been present, while I should have given the subject my warmest and best support, I would have entered my protest, though solitary, against the qualifying segment, for many reasons; one is, because I cannot see how the religion of the founders, and, for many hundred years, the upholders of our constitution, can be deemed inconsistent with the principles of the glorious fabric, or preventive of its perpetuity; a second is, that such an insinuation implies an indirect charge that the constitution of the present day is different from the charter extorted from King John, else the same religion would not be supposed to admit the erection of the one, and evict to the subversion of the other. Permit me to add, that with whatever art or industry insinuations, nay assertions, have been circulated, that my zeal and exertions have undergone, from time to time, a gradual decay, they are, at this time, as ardent and sincere as at any past period; and that I should be happy to resign my last breath in the same cause which I have been long pleading with puny powers but ardent mind. Think not, my friends, that I speak this to obtain your applause or gain your favour. The cause I mean is unrestricted and unqualified freedom to the whole human race to worship God according to the light of his own understanding, and dictates of his own conscience. I own, however, your cause has long been the first and most interesting subject of my thoughts and words; perhaps this may have arisen from a happy dictate of nature, while thousands of objects, in similar circumstances, excite the same feeling. Yet sensibility, the spur to action, is in proportion to the nearness of the object, because to it our limited power of attempting good may be more easily extended and effectually employed. Such was your relative situation, and hence my

heart has long felt particularly interested in your cause, and my tongue frequently attempted to plead your release from the mental restrictions under which you have long been labouring; and sure I am, that the same heart and tongue would have felt and spoken in the same manner on behalf of any other denomination of my brethren in the same circumstances and situation. Permit me to add one other word: Persevere in your petitions; they have already done much good in enlightening and liberalizing the public mind; if persevered in, they will do much more, though their object may be withheld. Exert yourselves a little longer; but let mildness and moderation temper your expressions; and, above all, be unanimous among yourselves, for union is strength, and strength success.

[The Doctor sat down amidst expressions of the most unbounded applause.]

#### CO. ANTRIM CATHOLIC MEETING.

OCTOBER 28TH.

On Thursday, at one o'clock, a General Meeting of the Roman Catholics of the county of Antrim, was held in the New Chapel, Donegal-street, for the purpose of renewing their application to the legislature for a repeal of the Penal Laws which still affect the Catholic body. The Meeting was numerous and respectable, and conducted with the greatest regularity and decorum. It was pleasing to observe that the number of their Protestant friends, who attended their former meetings, was not diminished on the present occasion.

James M'Guckin, Esq. was called to the chair; and the business of the meeting opened by him in the following speech.

"Gentlemen, we are here assembled, by virtue of a requisition from several Roman Catholics of the county of Antrim, to consider of the propriety of again petitioning the legislature in the ensuing session of Parliament, for a total and unqualified repeal of that penal code of laws, under which, I will say, not only the Catholic body, but the whole people of Ireland have suffered the most pernicious consequences; a code, which, by depriving the state of the industry and talents of more than three-fourths of the Catholic body, prevented their exertions from despair, and which, by assisting the ease and idleness of the other portion of the people, be-

numbered the best energies of the country. It is almost unnecessary for me to point out the advantages of constant petitioning; by this meeting it will shew that we neither sleep nor slumber in the prosecution of a measure which, I may boldly assert, not only the vital interests of Ireland, but that of the British Empire are concerned. Trace the progress of our cause from the year 1805 to the present period; mark the alteration of the reception of our petitions year after year; at first, by large majorities in Parliament, even the discussion of our question was refused, but last year leave was given to bring in a bill to remove all the restrictions that remain to be removed, and that bill was rejected by a majority of only four. Permit me, however, to say, I feel the greatest regret that the bill embraced any thing tending to alter the discipline and constitution of our church; that church has existed under its present state for time out of mind, and I challenge the person to point out a single instance of any thing dangerous to the constitution or liberties of this country, having been the result of the present mode of appointing our prelates. The only result that could be expected from the bill, as brought in, was to excite division amongst us, if any difference of opinion upon that topic could have existed. I am happy to find that whatever baneful motive could have occasioned the introduction of the ecclesiastical clauses into the bill of last year, it has failed of its effect; and, from the attendance of the persons I see here this day, they must recollect and feel that no minor differences, or matters of comparatively inferior importance, should prevent a cordial co-operation in that cause which is the common interest of us all."

Hugh Magill, Esq. after a few prefatory observations, moved the Resolutions, which were inserted in our last number, and which were passed unanimously.

Peter McGouran, Esq. seconded the Resolutions, in the following speech.

Mr. Chairman—I second these Resolutions, and hope they will meet with the unanimous approbation of this highly respectable meeting. They express in temperate language, our sufferings under an oppressive penal code, our patience when our best expectations were blasted, and our gratitude to our Protestant friends, who have strenuously, though unavailingly, supported our claims to emancipation; and before I sit down, you will permit me

to offer some observations on the state of our cause, and on its unhappy failure in the last session of Parliament, while I express my sanguine hopes of its ultimate triumphant success.

I am sorry, sir, that a legislative perseverance in that system of monopoly and intolerance, which has so long distracted our unhappy and ill-fated country, and proscribed or alienated the great majority of her population, and made them sojourners in the land of their nativity and the inheritance of their forefathers, has forced us to assemble ourselves to-day, to co-operate with the rest of our suffering body, by taking into consideration the propriety of re-petitioning Parliament for a restoration of her rights, and to pray to be reinstated in that honourable and equitable situation that one civilized member of the community should hold with another.

On the propriety of renewing our applications to the legislature, for a total removal of our political disabilities, I believe there is but one opinion amongst Catholics, and that opinion, which is to persevere, has been ably supported by almost every Protestant, whose interest would give respectability or importance to our cause, in every county where Catholic meetings have taken place; and I hope the decision of this day will shew our enemies there is no dereliction of duty in the Catholics of Antrim, or want of liberality in their Protestant brethren. They will see there is one irrefragable chain that connects and associates Catholics in our constitutional exertions for emancipation; that our open, manly, and legitimate proceedings are daily adding to our cause, such of the Protestant respectability and talent as have not before declared for us; that in their gloomy soliloquies on our certain success, they may say of the Catholic cause, as the poet says, in his beautiful description of fame, "*crescit eundo*." That they will see it to be useless longer to resist what justice and sound policy are loudly calling for; that no ministerial influence: no minions of power: no exclusive confederation, hostilely arrayed against us, can arrest our progress, or make us swerve from our just and lawful purpose. That our formidable phalanx, formed on a constitutional basis, flanked by our Protestant friends, and shielded by justice, is advancing in such a consolidated column, that nothing less than unrestricted, unconditional, unqualified emancipa-

tion, or simple repeal, will ever be able to either penetrate or dissolve it : yet our undoubted success may not be so near as we would wish.

On taking a retrospective view of the progress of our cause this last year, I see great cause of hope, but little of much exultation, or of immediate relief.

The almost universal call of the Irish nation, aided by many petitions from Great Britain, and the public declarations of almost every liberal society in the empire, in favour of emancipation and universal unrestricted liberty of conscience, had at length prevailed on the British legislature to listen to justice and right reason, and induced them take into consideration our long and unmerited sufferings. So soon as the house had formed itself into a committee, to see whether we had any legitimate claims to the rights of men, or rather to see whether we were physically men, or constitutionally monsters, the anxious Catholic, with every other friend to peace and harmony, perceiving the apparent good temper and spirit of accommodation that seemed to pervade the representatives of the people, were big with expectation of what this flattering appearance of legislative wisdom would bring forth. But contrary to every wish for internal peace, to every desire on our part, of a mutual accommodation, and of christian forgiveness of our many and unmerited wrongs, we found the remedy worse than the disease. Yes, Sir, I say, worse than the disease ; inasmuch as it aimed at fresh inroads on the miserable portion of constitutional privileges we already enjoy, by holding forth a kind of visionary relief to the oppressed laity, while it insidiously provided fresh penal enactments for our clergy, who are much the dearest class of our communion, to every honest sincere Catholic. It was another aim of the government to make an incurable incision in our persecuted church ; but they found her as invulnerable as usual, and our shepherds as watchful as ever. It was a bill, Sir, in the specious character of relief, but in its nature hostile to us ; and had it passed into a law, would have proved calamitous in its consequences. But thanks to the illiberality of Mr. Abbot and his w<sup>x</sup> of a majority, who prevented its pernicious effects, by strangling the hideous production in its birth.

As a Catholic I object to it, for its want of confidence in us, and were I a Protestant, I would object to it on account of the additional influence it would give the

Crown, by establishing a fourth estate in the government, not recognized by the constitution. The Crown is daily encroaching on the rights of the people. The ministry seem to consider the great population of the Empire, as constituting so many mechanical machines, as there are religious denominations in it ; that their several clergymen are like so many powerful levers, by whose influence (if they were properly suborned,) they could wield the whole power of the state, to serve their own purposes. They know there are no clergy better deserving of the gratitude of their flocks, than the Catholic clergy ; and thus they think a priest carries both the will and consciences of his hearers in his pockets ; and some of them think, to make Catholics loyal they must pension our clergy. I would be sorry to see our clergy descend from that elevated station they now hold, to become the purchased hirelings of a corrupt court ; and I believe I may say with truth, that, except in matters of religion, Catholics are as little led by their clergy, as any other set of men. Whenever a clergyman forgets his proper vocation, and begins to interfere in temporals, his motives have a right to be scrupulously scanned by all concerned, more especially, if any part of his living depends on the services he can render the minister of the day. I would remind him of what we are told by the great author of our religion, he cannot serve both God and mammon.

But as I am not much afraid of desertion, or a dereliction of duty on the part of our clergy, I consider there is an imperative call on us to discharge that duty which I hope every Catholic here as well as myself, considers indispensably incumbent on us to perform. We are met, Sir, to co-operate with the rest of the Catholic population of Ireland, in forwarding a brief memorial of our suffering to the Legislature, and to pray for an equal participation of the honours and emoluments that emanate from the British Constitution. As we contribute largely to its support, and are "*Primi aut in primis*" in its defence, we solicit an equal share in its advantages with the rest of our fellow subjects. This is the avowed and legitimate object of our meeting ; nor is it an object of little consolation to us, that in this laudable pursuit we have the attendance of so respectable and so intelligent a body of Protestants as have met here to day. It augurs well for our success.

When I look around on them, Sir, I feel a diffidence proceeding from a con-

scious sense of my own inability to address them : but, confiding in their indulgence, and in the purity of our motives, I am emboldened to proceed. The epithets, the calumnies, and invectives that have, by the enemies of toleration, been maliciously spewed out against us, are beneath our notice; they are the best proofs of the injustice of their opposition, and the holiness of their cause. So soon as an opponent stoops to ribaldry to support his opinion, he blinks the justice of his cause, and should be treated with silent contempt.

The government before made an insidious overture to redress our grievances, by proposing a compromise to us, that is, say they "deny your spiritual allegiance to the See of Rome; vest a veto in the King of England; acknowledge the King of England to be Bishop of Rome; become English Catholics, or Irish Protestants, which ever you please;" and then, and not till then, are we to enjoy the blessings of that Constitution, which our forefathers founded, which they maintained against the encroachments of Catholic Kings and of Catholic Courts, and which, even in their days of humiliation, they secured to their posterity by stipulated covenants, *bona fide*, entered into by both parties at Limerick, but *malu fide* performed to us, being soon disregarded, and latterly despised and forgotten. We only look for the benefits of those Articles of Capitulation; and while they are withheld from us, let us not be tauntingly told, we have no just claims to emancipation, and that whatever we get we must consider it as a boon. I maintain, we have every legitimate claim to the benefits of the constitution that those conditions entitle us to, and that loyal conduct and honest services can pretend to; yet, I would accept of emancipation as a boon, or in any honourable shape it might come, and be thankful for it.

The nature of that lonely-looking little Latin dissyllable, *Veto*, became so soon understood by every Catholic, learned and unlearned, that all dreaded the power of the little word, if vested in any other than in him who has so long used it, and to whom it properly belongs; and I will do the modest proposers of it the justice to say, few of them had diffidently enough to vindicate it openly.

They said to each other, "we will give it up; we will propose it, and more in another shape; we will tell the Catholics we will give them all they want, but still

we must have securities. Thus will we work on their credulity. We will go into a committee; we will make their champion Grattan, a member elect; we know him to be incorruptible, but he is not infallible; we will frame a Bill more disfranchising, more humiliating, and more politically degrading on them, than the dreaded *Veto*, or even their present condition. But then we will have it couched in more interpretable language—make it as like some of ourselves as possible, dubious in its meaning, and Janus-faced to the public. We will sanctify it with the name of Grattan, and we know Catholics are superstitious and idolatrous; they in a measure worship the man. In his zeal for victory, we will drive him off his guard; when he lays aside his fencing, we will easily overcome him; we will make him sign the death-warrants of Catholic liberties, and of Catholic hopes; we will make the first infraction on their ecclesiastical government; in a word, we will decapitate their church, silence them, and serve ourselves; and all this by that political nostrum, which we will denominate Grattan's recipe for emancipation. They will swallow the prescribed draft, but it will only prove a temporary anodyne: like a soporiferous dose of laudanum, it will lull them asleep; but they will rise out of their unnatural slumbers, with an increase of disorder, and without hopes of recovery." These, Sir, have been the chimerical notions of some of the framers of the last bill; but they have been miserably mistaken. There are Catholics in Ireland, who, though they cannot swallow a pill of recantation, can digest a bill of emancipation as well as any member that was at the drawing up of the late one; and who, though they revere the hallowed name of the incorruptible Grattan, will never allow that it can give sterling currency to base coin.

Such has been the reception this clumsy, elaborate production, this onerous drag-chain on emancipation, got with the public, that it pleased none. When it was likely to pass, all were alarmed. Dr. Milner protested against it. The Irish Bishops disapproved of it. Every discerning, uninfluenced by Catholic scorned the insidious overture; and such was the panic of the monopolists, those zealous supporters of what is emphatically termed Church and State, but whom I call the supporters of their own private estates, that they were nearly frightened to death. They knew not what to do. They thought Castle-

reagh had deserted them ; Canning had pledged himself ; Grattan's eloquence was overwhelming ; their all was likely to be lost. In their despairing state of mind they applied to Mr. Abbot : in him they found some consolation ; he allayed their palpitations ; he told them that he would be a helm to the sinking vessel of the State, and a saviour to his favoured people ; that he would put in a timely *canon* ; that he would both *veto* and *negotiate* the proposed Bill ; that it would be dangerous to give Catholics more political power ; that the spreading of nunneries and monasteries over Ireland endangered the Church, and threatened the total subversion of the Protestant religion in that country, and that a Catholic should never legislate with him in the House of Commons.

Whatever may be the progress of religious institutions in Ireland, I will not say ; but however numerous our Abbeys may be, I hope we will never have any more Abbots to represent us in the Imperial Parliament. This *chevaux-de-frise* of a Protestant Parliament seems much alarmed at the admission of a Catholic into it ; but I would tell him that Catholic integrity and Catholic abilities are not more dreaded by him in the House of Commons, than is the Catholic bayonet in the field by the enemies of Great-Britain. Catholics are as impatient in battle as they are honest and warm in debate ; and whenever the trumpet is sounded to the charge, they huzza for their king and victory, present their bayonets, and shout *fi gh a ballagh*. These are disqualifying qualifications in a magnanimous people, and sound very unpleasantly in the ears of a French soldier ; but they are no way offensive to the great mind of Lord Wellington, a man who has raised the military glory of his country higher, and if her real interests have been promoted by a prosecution of the war in Spain, has done her a greater service than Mr. Abbot, his friends, and all their genealogy.

Such has been the fate of the abandoned *Veto*. Such has been the fate of the scouted Bill that was likely to be foisted on us, with imposing attitudes ; and such will be the fate of every attempt to chicane or cajole his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects by pompously presenting them political privileges, and

surreptitiously depriving them of their religious liberty.

In our struggle for emancipation we have much yet to encounter. We have a half-vanquished host of intolerants and monopolists to either silence or satisfy. The hue and cry in all their mouths is "*The Church is in danger.*" These watchful guardians of the Church have exhausted their inventive faculties to conjure up securities for her ; and what did they all amount to ? to an *intra et extra muros*. Or rather a verbose compound of impeachment, distrusts, tests and penalties. I said here before, and I say here again, that as Catholics, we can give no securities, more than we have already given, or are willing to give ; our simple but unqualified oath of allegiance, for simple repud, or unqualified emancipation. If our outlawry can ever be terminated, if we can again be admitted within the pale of the constitution, if we can be considered deserving of the simple rights of nature, or of men, or to be safe members of the community, it is a sufficient security. If we cannot be tied by the sacred obligation of a voluntary oath, we are unfit for freedom, and dangerous in society, and the Government would do well to extirpate, rather than emancipate us ; but history, our conduct, and devoted services, belie such imputations.

It was the conscientious adherence of our ancestors to the house of Stuart, that entailed so much poverty and political misery on their posterity. They faithfully served a faithless and ungrateful prince, a coward, and a bigot ; not because he was a Catholic, but because the sacred pledge of an oath is unalienable, untrausturable, indispensable. There, sir, lies "the head and front of our offending no more." When that oath of protection which he took was violated by him, when he was no longer able or willing to protect his Irish subjects and devoted followers, then, of course, that mutual obligation, that reciprocity of protection and allegiance, that should subsist between a prince and his subjects became void ; and they were agreeably to the constitutional sense of an *allegiance* oath, conscientiously exonerated from their obligation.

But did they pay less regard to that oath of allegiance which they took to Wm. III. than they did to that which

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they took to James II? Did their subsequent conduct shew they were more partial to a Catholic than to a Protestant King? Did they abandon their sovereign and join the standard of the old Pretender in the reign of George I., or of the young Pretender in the reign of George II.? Or did they ever serve the house of Stuart more faithfully than their posterity have served the House of Hanover? Did the former show more courage in battle, or zeal for victory, under St. Ruth, than the latter have done under Abercrombie, under Nelson, under Moore, under Wellington?

Where have the British navy rode triumphant, that the sea has not been tinged with Catholic blood? Where have the British arms been victorious, that the plains have not been strewed with the Catholic slain? Or where has the Catholic soldier shrunk from death, or spared his enemy, because he was a Catholic, when victory was disputed, and Britain's interest and honour were at stake. The soldier's glory is victory—his hopes, if he survive, are honour and preferment. The degraded Catholic, though crowned with victory, feels the disqualifying effects of a penal system, that whispers to his elated soul: "moderate your expectation—you are a Catholic—so far shall you be advanced, but no farther." Religion, that sacred term, is made the bugbear and barrier to his preferment. But, I intreat our enemies, those "men of honest prejudices," (as a certain Lord calls them,) to make religion no longer a pretext. They are not sincere—they are only nominally Protestants—they have virtually no religion. There is not one article, in the thirty nine that form the Constitution of the Protestant Church, which says, Catholics shall not enjoy the Constitution of the Empire. They would give a clamorous support to what they call the "*Protestant Ascendancy*". The same people would give inconsistent support to any ascendancy that would give them an ample pecuniary support. For my part, I am at a loss to know, what such people mean by the term, "*Protestant Ascendancy*." If they infer by it, that because the King is a Protestant, every person in the realm, professing the Protestant religion, has a right to *lord* it over every other of his Majesty's subjects, professing a different religious faith, I deny their inference in the most unqualified manner. It is a presumption not recognized by the Constitution, inconsistent

with the principles of a free Government, and an unwarrantable interference between man and his Maker. In yourself, Sir, may be seen the injustice of the British Government to Catholic subjects, and in your family the devotion of Catholics to the cause of their country. Your two brothers have bravely fallen in their country's service, the one in the breach in St. Sebastian's, and the other in another quarter of the globe, while you their surviving one, with supplicating language, solicit the benefit of that Constitution in defence of which your brothers' blood has so prodigally flown for no seeming purpose to you, but to nerve the arm that is uplifted against you.

Whether is the British Constitution exclusively Protestant or fundamentally Catholic? I say it is the latter. They were Catholics that framed it; that fostered it; that established it. They shared it with their Protestant brethren. They both enjoyed it in common. Catholics have been swindled out of their share of it. We do not look for its restoration by the bloody and deceitful means by which we have been deprived of it, but by humble petitions. Our complaints must be heard, our request must be acceded to. And why? Because they are bottomed on justice and sound policy. The sense of the people is for us; and it is the sense of the people that constitutes the legal validity of a legislative act. The good sense of the constituted authorities of the empire, will make them one day give in to the wishes of their constituents. It is under these circumstances, I say, emancipation must come, and it will not be in the power of opposition wincing under the chagrin of falling greatness to prevent it. All from the Prince to the peasant, from the Bishop to the Curate, (the illiberal and selfish excepted) are loudly calling for the measure, and hoot the objections to it. This is not a struggle for ascendancy between the Catholic and Protestant religion, as our enemies say. It is the effort of justice against oppression, of slaves for freedom. Although I am a Catholic, both by education and conviction, I would be sorry to charge the Protestant religion, or the genuine professors of it, with the malignity belonging to monopoly and selfishness. Protestants, and Protestant Dissenters, whom I consider the same, have been my earliest and continue to be my most intimate friends. At their knee I received the first elements of learning, and in

their society I have heard the purest sentiments of liberality. Wherever I found a contrary principle, I could easily trace it to interested motives, or a want of information; and I have often known the benevolence of their hearts make them forget the prejudices of their minds.

It is to our own intestine division we owe all our misfortunes. Both Catholic and Protestant contributes his share to what in many cases falls heavy on both. It was the unhappy division of the Irish that first induced the second Henry to invade Ireland, well knowing that the advantages of his conquest would do more than recompense him for his trouble in conquering.

The same unhappy divisions amongst the Welsh, inflamed Edward the First with the desire of annexing the principality of Wales to the English crown; a people whom neither the Roman, Saxon, nor Norman invaders were ever able to deprive of their independence. In the contest Llewellyn, their Prince lost his life, and they their liberties. Scotland, from the same causes, has shared the same fate. All have fallen into the insatiable vortex of English monopoly and ambition. England well knowing the facility there is in subjugating a people, *divisos inter se*, established the principle "*divide et impera*;" in my opinion a very pernicious one. The government that attaches itself to a faction, makes the King only Monarch of a portion of his subjects. To reign securely is to reign in the affections of the people. I therefore consider it impious to charge either the Catholic or the Protestant religion with what has been uniformly the character of the English people, and it is no easy matter to change the nature of an animal. The light of liberality is at length beginning to dawn on their selfish souls, and to dissipate that darkness that so confined their natural horizon, that they could never see beyond the limits of their own interest.

At no period in our history was this system of division more encouraged than at present. Protestants are permitted to associate themselves against Catholics in an insulting and hostile manner. Catholics think themselves called on to associate for self-defence. Both parties, in my opinion, acting in an unchristian and unconstitutional manner; but surely the former are the more blameable. I would advise them not to lose sight of that divine admonition, "to do as they would be done by." I would likewise advise the latter to adopt

the christian principle of forgiveness towards them, for many of them "know not what they do." I say this in the presence of both Catholics and Protestants. Attached to no party, but what I consider for the good of my country, never having taken an illegal oath, never having met with a man impudent enough to propose to me an oath of secret combination; never having said of any person in his absence, what I would not say in his presence, I disclaim attachment to any party, and despise their opinion of me.

I have a wish that soars beyond the grovelling malignity of party spirit. It is for an equal participation of constitutional rights. For a fair and impartial distribution of justice; and to see Irishmen of every religious persuasion, sinking in oblivion their irreligious animosities and associating like christians, for the individual happiness and general good of all."

Dr. Drennan then rose and addressed the Meeting, as follows:

Mr. Chairman—I know not what interpretation others may give to the late ambiguous conduct of the House of Commons, but, for my part, I should wish to interpret it in this way. It is the will and the wish of that Hon. House, that the Catholics of Ireland, and the Protestants of Ireland should assemble together once in every year, for the purposes of promoting public peace and national concord, not to commemorate hatred and hostility; not to commemorate, in a spirit of selfish exclusion, civil war, and battles, and shedding of brother's blood; but an association of amity and good neighbourhood, prospective of political liberty; not looking back to the disastrous periods of history, as to cities sacked and towns in flames, but forward to happier days with eager hope and affectionate congratulation. Yes, it must have been the intention of the Hon. House, that you, Catholics, and we, Protestants, should meet annually together, to hold out our hands to each other, to exchange hearts; to confirm past resolutions; to pledge ourselves to future perseverance; to bind the Catholic body still more indissolubly to a cause, in which not only their common interests, but their individual honour and honesty are so intimately involved; to bind the Protestant body still more strictly to fidelity in friendship, and cordiality of assistance; in short, to make both Catholics and Protestants cohere together in one family feeling, ratifying their patriotic fellowship by every earthly

tie; and sanctifying it, as we do at present, by the solemnity of the place in which we assemble, dedicated as it is, to the purposes of religion.

A Pagan author\* has said, that one good man struggling with the storms of fate, is an object worthy the contemplation of the Gods; and, certainly, a whole nation making the same struggle with the unity of a single man, unappalled by every obstacle that opposes them, undaunted in their resolution, inflexible in their perseverance, untainted in their loyalty, rising buoyant above the torrent of prejudice and calumny, and yet ready to pour forth their blood in defence of those who despitefully use them: this, certainly, is a sublime spectacle, and may even merit the approbation of the divinity whom we, Christians, in common adore.

In obedience, then, to the sense of the legislature, as I would understand it, I feel myself grateful for this fresh opportunity of affixing, as it were, a new seal to our family compact, this renewed occasion of calling into exercise the best and most generous feelings of human nature. Sir, the Catholic question as an argument is exhausted, but, as a subject of sentiment and feeling, it never fails to strike forth a spring in every patriotic breast, and it is under such impressions alone, I chuse, at present to consider it. Mr. Grattan once said that the genius of Ireland was affection; and, in the spirit and warmth of that affection, do I now press my hand to my heart, and then hold it to you, my countrymen, with the sincerest good wishes for your speedy, complete and unqualified emancipation, for a simple repeal, a summary repeal, a sweeping repeal, an unsuspecting repeal; a sempiternal repeal of that penal code, either of penalty or privation, which has so long polluted the public law of the British Empire; which has so long obstructed the free flow and circulation of the blood of life through an important member of the community, by that means paralyzing the exertions of the whole empire in leaving one of its important members without its active powers,

\* *Ecce spectaculum dignum ad quod respiciat intentus operi suo Deus. Non video unquam quid habeat in torris pulchritus si convertere animum velit quam ut spectat Catonem jam partibus non semel fractis, nihilominus, inter ruinas publicas, erectum.*

although, at the same time, endowed with the most exquisite sensibility.

For my part, Sir, I have just risen to express, in as few words as I possibly could, my joyous confidence in the success of your just and righteous cause; and I place that confidence not so much in the promises or in the performance of political parties, as in the pressing exigencies of the times; not so much in the nature of man, as in the nature of things. O! it cannot long be, that the very Jews in France should find a country there, where they have a free competition to the first civil and political employments under the state, while the Catholics, with all their property and population, are excluded from any station of political power in their native country, assimilated to Britain in every thing—except your bonds.

All Europe appears about to rise in mass. It is the war, and the consequences of the war, which will assuredly work out your political redemption. This war it is, which will, ere long, necessitate the calling forth of the whole population of the Empire; and the fourth part, I may say the third part of that population, will, must, at last, find its adequate and authentic value in the councils of the Sovereign, and the decisions of the Legislature. Government must shortly, very shortly, recur to their final resources of physical force, and the last reason of Kings will finish by making a first appeal to the affections of the people. You will not owe the restoration of your rights to reason or justice, or expediency, but to necessity. Then it is, and then, alas, only it is, that the value of a free people is properly prized and exactly ascertained, when last extremities compel administrations to feel and recognise that value. Then come out the "Landwehrs" and the "Landstrums;" but is it not better and more prudent, before the people be thus called forth in mass, to secure their affections. Then the people are no longer vilified as mob, but they come forth in their majestic momentum, and are saluted in terms of deep respect and high consideration.

I beseech you, fellow-countrymen, on this, and every other occasion, to repel the imputation of mob, by moving forward to your object, placed on the summit of virtuous ambition, with one body and one soul, with closed column and perfect rank: I beseech you to preserve, in this movement, the same discipline which an army does in constant expectation of meeting



with an enemy; the same regularity and good order; the same strict obedience to the moral law, and the Christian law, and the law of the land, which a military body pays to the law martial; the same watchfulness and attention against ambuscades, against spies, against stragglers; in short, to adopt such a strong, open, systematic, upright, downright manner of proceeding, as will put aside your professed friends and secret enemies, who are now watching for any, the slightest infringement of the law, which may enable them to break through your solid, and otherwise unassailable battalion: No, you will preserve unity in word and deed. Your political conduct will be considered, like the continuity of your religion, which, as an eloquent advocate of yours has said, "yielded, like the air, and then closed upon itself, without testifying a wound."

Sir, all that remains of Ireland, politically speaking, is, I think, comprised, and concentrated in the Catholic question. In the shipwreck of our national Sovereignty, this is a plank to which, with all the powers of life we should cling, when all is parting into pieces on all sides around us, when the waves are making entrance from without, and the dry rot of corruption has nearly consumed the main timbers within, let us tie ourselves to the main mast of Catholic emancipation, as our forlorn hope in this sea of difficulties and dangers, as our ultimate refuge after the loss of our political existence, after the loss of dear, deserted, degraded IRELAND.

John Hancock rose and addressed the Meeting as follows:—Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking, I would be inclined to be silent on the present occasion, if I did not fear my mere presence here might not be a sufficient indication of the warmth which I take in the cause of my Catholic countrymen, and my anxiety for the success of their just cause, which increasing conviction proves to my mind to be right. Little remains to be said on the occasion; most men have taken their stand. On one side are the liberal and enlightened; on the other are those who, in default of reason, are obliged to summon up all their prejudices, and to bring to their aid even the tales of the nursery, against Catholic emancipation. For my part, I am disposed to congratulate you on the failure of the last bill. It was coupled with such clauses, requiring securities, as they were called,

as would have entailed bondage on you. It is not to be expected that I can enter into the feelings of your church on the subject, but viewing it in a political light, the only light in which any man has a right to view the religion of another, it would have increased the dangerous ministerial power of the Crown, which some years ago was declared "to have increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished." Already government have their established church. They have also a demi establishment in the Regium Donum, to fetter the liberties of Ireland. They wanted a third establishment in you. And therefore I rejoice that the bill was rejected by your friends. The present respectable and orderly Meeting is a practical illustration that the people have an undoubted right to assemble together to discuss political subjects, and prepare petitions to the legislature; and that, whether rich or poor, you are not to be considered a mob, because you have not a magistrate present to direct or control your proceedings. Your conduct this day proves, you are not a mob, and is a practical refutation of the unfounded assertion. Your enemies are anxious that you should violate the law; they are conscious that if you keep to the law you are out of their power; but if you depart from the law, they will triumph over you. I caution you against entering into any illegal associations, which would sully the purity of the cause in which you are engaged, and endanger your own safety. Your opponents are bound by the bonds of a secret and illegal association. Imitate not their example. Your enemies will doubtless lay snares to entrap you. I take the privilege of a friend, to recommend to you the greatest caution to avoid their snares, that you may continue to pursue the same steady, but resolute course, which must eventually prove successful. Abate nothing of your firmness or your energy, but at the same time "hold to the law." Then shall you escape the many stratagems which are laid to entrap you.

The Chairman then read the Resolutions, which were unanimously agreed to.

[The 4th resolution of the Catholic Meeting held in Belfast, inserted at page 333, having been printed from an incorrect copy, the resolution is inserted in its corrected form:]

Resolved—That as our faith and the present form of our church discipline have been strictly scrutinised, and found per-

fectly consistent with the unqualified allegiance which we owe to our King and the British constitution, we consider it degrading to offer us emancipation embarrassed

with any restricting arrangement which might intermeddle or interfere, directly or indirectly, with the free exercise of our religion.]

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DOCUMENTS RELATING TO PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

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*At a General Meeting of the Subscribers to the Royal Lancasterian Institution, held on Special Affairs at the Freemason's Tavern, Nov. 10. 1815.*

His Royal Highness the Duke of KENT in the Chair.

A Report was read from the Finance Committee and Trustees, recommending the adoption of a new code of regulations for the future government of the Institution, which having been received and approved,

On the motion of the Duke of Bedford, seconded by the Duke of Sussex, it was unanimously resolved,

1. This Institution shall be designated "The Institution for promoting the British System for the Education of the Labouring and Manufacturing Classes of Society of every Religious Persuasion."

2. This Institution shall consist of a Patron, Vice-Patrons, President, Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, Secretary, Life and Annual Members, together with such Officers as may be deemed necessary for conducting the affairs of the Institution.

3. The Institution shall maintain a School on an extensive scale to educate children. It shall support and train up young persons of both sexes for supplying properly-instructed Teachers to the inhabitants of such places in the British dominions at home and abroad, as shall be desirous of establishing Schools on the British System. It shall instruct all persons, whether natives or foreigners, who may be sent from time to time, for the purpose of being qualified as Teachers in this or any other country.

\* \* \* The school shall be open to the public for the purpose of exhibiting the system of teaching and training, every afternoon at three o'clock, Saturday excepted.

4. All schools which shall be supplied with Teachers at the expence of this Institution, shall be open to the children of parents of all religious denominations; reading, writing, arithmetic and needlework,

shall be taught; the lessons for reading shall consist of extracts from the Holy Scriptures; no Catechism or peculiar religious tenets shall be taught in the schools, but the children shall be enjoined to attend regularly the place of worship to which their parents belong.

\* \* \* The grand object of the Institution being to promote education in general, any application for the training of a Teacher at the expence of the persons thus applying, will be attended to, although such intended school is not to be conducted on the extended principles of this Institution.

Other regulations of the usual description as connected with the management of public institutions being passed, it was unanimously resolved,

That the Rules and Regulations now read and approved, stand for confirmation at the next General Meeting, and that the Finance Committee and Trustees be requested to continue their services until that period, and to avail themselves of the assistance of such other subscribers as they may deem proper for conducting the affairs of the Institution.

That the cordial Thanks of this Meeting be given to his Royal Highness the Duke of Kent, for the deep interest which he has uniformly evinced for the preservation and prosperity of this Institution; for the unceasing attention he has displayed in watching over it, and for the facility with which he has at all times permitted the friends of the system to consult him on every emergency.

That the cordial Thanks of this Meeting be given to his Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex, who with equal zeal has uniformly co-operated with his Royal Brother in promoting the interests of this important institution.

That the cordial Thanks of this Meeting be given to his Grace the Duke of Bedford, who had the penetration to discover, and the firmness to support, a system of education eminently calculated to raise the moral character of the great mass of the people, on a scale sufficiently broad and